consignments can be expedited with the help of the introduction of large scale containers scanning equipment and round the clock supervision and control at check points. This suggestion was taken up for implementation by the major ports and the customs department and in Jawahar Lal Nehru Port, Nava Sheva which is the biggest container port in the country, the container scanning equipment has been installed.

(e) and (f) Department of Commerce has not received any suggestion from the exporters to create a separate fund for greater market access and a single nodal agency for exports.

Effect of global crisis as India's exports

1715. SHRI NARESH GUJRAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the present global crisis is going to adversely affect India's exports; and

(b) what fiscal steps Government is taking to protect our labour intensive export industries so that poor people employed in such industries are not rendered jobless?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) Yes, Sir

(b) Government has announced a series of measures to arrest the deceleration in India's exports in the wake of slowdown in the Global Economy. These measures, *inter-alia*, include provision of interest subvention in pre and post-shipment export credit for labour intensive exports, provision of additional funds for full refund of Terminal Excise Duty/CST, Government back-up guarantee to ECGC to enable it to provide guarantees for exports to difficult markets/products, refund of service tax to exporters on foreign agent commissions upto 10% of FOB value of exports *etc*.

Assistance to small tea growers in Assam

1716. KUMAR DEEPAK DAS: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has explored the potential of Small Tea Growers in Industrial Growth in Assam;

(b) if so, the plans Government has proposed in helping them financially; and

(c) whether Government has any scheme for the small tea growers as they need more help from Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (c) The contribution from small tea growers to the national tea production is around 250 million kgs and it accounts for nearly 25% of the all India tea production of which 10% is accounted for by small growers in Assam. In order to harness the potential economic value of the small grower sector, the measures adopted

by Government are aimed at improving their farm productivity and quality of their produce, and then providing them with a market access to ensure a reasonable return from their investments. Focused attention is being paid to organize the growers into Self Help Groups (SHGs) and Financial assistance is being extended to them facilitating establishment of proper leaf collection system, transport arrangements and establishing proper partnership arrangements with the quality tea processing factories. The self help groups are provided with 100% grant for setting up of leaf collection centers, storage godowns, purchasing Leaf weighing scales, Plastic crates/nylon leaf carry bags. Transport vehicles are provided at 50% of the cost. Each SHG is provided with a revolving fund @ Rs. 10,000/- ha for meeting the cost of field inputs such as fertilizers, pesticides, sprayers *etc.* A special training on modern aspects of tea growing is organized for selected two members from each self help groups who in turn on completion of the training are expected to impart training to other members of the SHG and also take care of the management of the tea area under the command of the SHG. Besides meeting the training fee and boarding and lodging cost, each trainee is provided with stipend @ Rs. 500/- per month for next six months from the date of completion of the training.

Training programme for small tea growers in Assam

1717. KUMAR DEEPAK DAS: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has taken up training programme for small tea growers under Eleventh Plan period;

(b) if so, when Government will start to impart training;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) whether such programme will cover all the districts of Assam?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (d) Yes, Sir.

(b) Imparting training to the small tea growers is already in process.

(c) Does not arise.

Trade between India and Singapore

1718. SHRI ABDUL WAHAB PEEVEE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has any plan to increase the scope of import/export between India and Singapore in near future;

(b) if so, whether Government has taken up the matter with Singapore in this regard;

(c) whether Government has identified the items which are in great demand in Singapore and vice-versa;